

~~Top Secret~~

YUGOSLAVIA: More Labor Unrest

More strikes have broken out in Yugoslavia this week, dimming hopes that the settlement of a protracted strike by miners on Monday would ease the country's labor problems. Local trade union leaders, in a rare move, organized one of the strikes at a meat packing plant in Zagreb, according to press reports. Unlike the wave of work stoppages in March, the new strikes have been confined to Croatia and involve only a few firms. Although wages are at the heart of the disputes, workers have increasingly been raising concerns about financial mismanagement and job security.

Labor unrest is likely to increase because dissatisfaction over wage restrictions remains high and because the authorities have taken a tough stand on wage increases. Concerns about job security will sharpen tensions if Belgrade enforces a new bankruptcy law by closing insolvent firms. The strike in Zagreb is unusual in that it is being organized by a union—strikes in Yugoslavia are usually spontaneous—and may portend a major challenge to Belgrade's authority.

~~Top Secret~~

14 May 1987